

FY 2013-14 FINAL REPORT

FOR CBO/PHG GRANT FUNDING
FROM THE COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO
TO THE SLO NOOR FOUNDATION

Grant Amount: \$150,000
Program Name: SLO Noor Clinic: Healthcare for the Uninsured

Submitted: September 8, 2014

Contact Information:

Dr. Ahmad Nooristani, Exec. Director
805-748-8369
slonoorfoundation@gmail.com

or Marilyn Mayor
805-462-8761
solutions-mm@thegrid.net

**SLO NOOR FOUNDATION'S
FINAL REPORT FOR CBO/PHG FUNDING AWARDED
FOR FISCAL YEAR 2013-14**

Grant Funds Awarded for Fiscal Year 2013-14: \$150,000

Program/Project Summary: SLO Noor Clinic: Healthcare for the Uninsured

Through the grant period ending June 30, 2014, the SLO Noor Clinic has provided uninsured SLO County residents (ages 18 to 64) with access to quality healthcare – *primary care exams and treatments, diagnostic screenings, vision, dental, physical therapy, health education, and auxiliary services* – with an emphasis on preventative care. By evaluating and treating patients via these multiple perspectives and disciplines, we have continuously (since opening in October 2011) contributed to the overall health and wellness of the population we serve and have helped reduce healthcare costs countywide.

Goal/Objective	Major Tasks (in order to achieve goal)	% of Goal Achieved (as of 6/30/2014)
Continue to provide primary care exams/treatments, vision care, physical therapy, health education, and auxiliary services	A. Continue utilizing volunteer medical professionals to deliver patient care services B. Replenish supplies and small equipment as needed.	A. 100% and ongoing. (Volunteer practitioners continue to comprise 99% of our staffing). B. 100% and ongoing (See #1 below)
Begin offering dental services: exams, hygiene treatments, and basic restorative procedures	A. Complete tenant improvements now underway B. Secure equipment & supplies for a 1-3 chair dental suite C. Replenish supplies and small equipment as needed	A. 100% completed. (Dental clinic opened March 2014). B. 100%. Opened as a 3-chair (not 1-chair) dental suite C. 100% and ongoing (See #2 below)
Continue in-house laboratory services to provide accurate, reliable test results in minutes	A. Replenish supplies & small equipment as needed. B. Provide refresher courses or new protocol training to existing volunteer medical team. C. Train new volunteer (or paid) medical team members on I-Stat equipment.	A. 100% and ongoing B. 100% and ongoing C. 100% and ongoing (See #3 below)
Continue providing appropriate patients with Physician advised diagnostic testing that cannot be performed at SLO Noor Clinic	A. Continue to work collaboratively with current facilities/agencies that provided outside services in 2012-13. B. Transition from pro-bono to negotiated discounted rates for outside services. C. Cultivate new relationships	A. 100% and ongoing. B. 100% and ongoing. C. 100% and ongoing. (See #4 below)

	with specialized facilities or agencies.	
Increase both the clinic's capacity and Physicians' efficiency	A. Increase clinic hours for primary care appts. by 4 hrs/wk B. Hire a part-time Nurse Practitioner (revised to Physician Assistant)	A. 100% since Jan. 2014 and ongoing. B. 100% as of Jan. 2014 and ongoing. (See #5 below)

Details of Goal/Objective Results:

1. Our volunteer medical teams remain as the cornerstone for the SLO Noor Clinic's (SNC's) operations. On rotating shifts throughout the year, 183 dedicated practitioners who already have busy professional lives, but believe in healthcare for all and contribute personal time at SNC to care for the uninsured. With the launch of the dental center, additional volunteers joined our team: 19 dentists, 7 oral surgeons, 8 endodontists, 4 periodontists, 14 hygienists, 8 dental assistants, 3 dental lab techs and several men and women who help with office operations. Recruitment of new specialists is always ongoing. (*Example: skin cancer screenings and treatments via a "freeze gun" are now offered once a month by a volunteer Physician Assistant with expertise in dermatology.*) Based on EDD Occupational Wage Charts, the value of the volunteers' hours was \$311,252 between 7/2013 and 6/2014..
2. A number of SLO County officials and dignitaries were on hand in mid-March 2014 to share in the happy celebration and ribbon cutting of our dental clinic located in Suite 110 at 3071 S. Higuera in San Luis Obispo. It took a little longer than originally envisioned to launch a dental component, but the trade-off was that rather than opening with just 1 exam room completed (as originally planned), all 3 exam stations are fully equipped and being utilized. Thanks to the efforts of a special start-up committee of community volunteers, a substantial amount of equipment, labor and materials were secured in-kind which helped conserve cash. During the soft opening in late March, only 10 dental patients were seen because their problems were so extensive that their appointment times far exceeded normal time needed, but patient figures are increasing monthly. Almost immediately, the dental appointment wait list grew to 300 persons for this new resource in SLO County. Currently open part-time 2 days weekly, the dentists are using a triage approach: treating the most-in-need (such as serious pain, difficulty eating/speaking, severe infections, etc.) first. Some patients had previously never been to a dentist ... ever. Our current range of services provided FREE to uninsured adults include exams, hygiene, and basic restorative procedures (such as extractions and fillings). Through June 2014, dental services valued at \$48,818 have been provided.
3. I-Stat and other medical supplies have been purchased to re-supply inventory as needed. July through June, \$41,826 was spent for medical supplies; a portion of which was funded by the CBO/PHG grant. Between 7/2013 and 6/2014, 1,018 in-house lab tests were performed. The "Top 5" lab tests performed during this grant period were: urine dips, lipid, HgbA1c, WBC, and Hgb. Under the direction of the Clinic's Medical Director, existing volunteer practitioners and our paid Physician's Assistant received refresher courses or new protocol training as applicable. Prospective new Volunteer Physicians and health professionals must complete a thorough vetting system. When approved and his/her credentials and licensing information has been input into our system, the new team member is trained on the Clinic's protocols and the I-Stat plus other pertinent equipment such as the EKG machine. Note: the Lead Optometrist and Lead Dentist also insure that volunteer practitioners in their respective centers are fully vetted and then trained on equipment and/or software. *Examples: a HRT high tech optic nerve analyzer donated in 2014 to the vision center, and Dentrix software for the dental center.*
4. During this grant term, 671 diagnostic screenings or specialty procedures which we are not equipped to provide in-house were performed. *Examples: 85 mammograms, 33 colonscopies, 216 radiology services.* We negotiated pricing agreements with outside facilities – primarily Sierra Vista Regional Medical Center

and Pueblo Radiology Medical Group. We pay Medi-Cal rates or less for these services such as ultrasounds, x-rays, and biopsies. July through June, \$68,510 has been spent; the ability to provide our physicians with information that otherwise would be "hidden" is priceless. As the vast majority of our new patients are significantly past due on recommended screening schedules (like for mammograms), bringing patients up to date has been a highly important component in early detection for our focus on preventative care. Treating conditions and diseases before they escalate to more serious levels provides benefits to both the patients and the community. We also note that our multi-disciplinary approach further enhances the opportunity to elevate and/or optimize patient health. Patient files from our vision and dental centers provides our physicians with information to evaluate patients from an overall health perspective and provide in-house treatments. *Example: we know diabetics are more likely to develop glaucoma and dental plaque can decrease heart health.*

5. Since January 2014, medical appointments are now available Tues.– Sat. at the Phillips Lane location, rather than just part-time Fri/Sat. This has resulted in a dramatic increase in patients served: 504 appointments July-Dec.; 1,031 between Jan.-June ... and 75% were returning patients indicating to us that the patients indeed consider SLO Noor Clinic their medical home and are staying current with recommended screening schedules and/or follow-up appointments for chronic illnesses such as diabetes, hypertension, and heart conditions to monitor status. Hiring a .5 FTE Physician Assistant (PA) who started in January was instrumental in our ability to expand our days/hours of operation. (Note: Without needing to adjust our budget, we are fortunate to have added an excellent PA rather than a P/T Nurse Practitioner as originally planned.) As we had anticipated, she is focusing on follow-up appointments for chronic illness patients and overseeing in-house lab testing during the workweek. This allows our volunteer physicians to focus on new patient exams and evaluations. *Other employment notes:* Dr. Ahmad Nooristani, the clinic's founder and Executive Director, met with County Supervisors this spring to update them on our progress. During the conversations, he also talked about a challenge we were facing. Like almost all free dental clinics nationwide, finding enough dental assistants who can volunteer their skills during the days/times the clinic is open is extremely rare. We have a few dental assistant volunteers and they are wonderful, but there were still gaps in manpower coverage. So shortly after the grand opening, we hired a .5 FTE Dental Assistant. Rounding out our paid employees are our full-time Clinic Manager and .5 FTE Clinic Coordinator who have been with us since our 2011 start-up phase as volunteers and becoming employees in 2012. Total payroll expenditures for this grant term total \$100,391.

Program/Project OUTPUTS:

Output Measures:

- **Volunteer medical professionals will provide 1600 (or more) patient appointments for primary care, vision, physical therapy or dental services during a 12-month period.** *Exceeded 1,600. There were 2,451 patient appointments 7/2013 – 6/2014 compared to 1,603 in the previous 12 months.*
- **100 (or more) patients will receive diagnostic testing not currently available on-site at clinic.** *Accomplished. There were 671 diagnostic screenings or specialty procedures.*
- **900 (or more) lab tests will be conducted in-house during a 12-month period.** *Accomplished. There were 1,018 in-house lab tests.*
- **450 (or more) free prescription eyeglasses will be dispensed during a 12-month period** *Accomplished. There were 780 eye exams or disease treatments and 762 free eyeglasses dispensed.*
- **Expand medical clinic hours by (at least) 4 hrs/week before the end of 2013** *Beginning in January 2014, medical appointments are now offered part-time Tues.-Sat. CBO/PHG grant assistance was a vital part of our ability to meet this goal. Thank you.*

Data will be collected on:

- **The number and type(s) of health education given to patient/family seen at our clinic** *100% of patients have attended our in-house education offerings or received one-on-one consultation from a volunteer physician to develop a personalized wellness plan. HeartAware and Diabetes Management classes continue to be the most popular classes. We also (in coordination with a state-sponsored program) have added Smoking Cessation classes and have been planning/coordinating some future new*

offerings with French Hospitals' professional educators. Informational handouts tailored to each patient's particular needs are also distributed.

- **The number of referrals sent to sub-specialist and what kind of specialist was needed**
During this grant term, specialists assisted 179 patients. Top specialties were cardiology and neurology (20 each); orthopedic (18); neurology and mental counseling (16 each); followed by urology, EENT, OB/GYN, and gastrointestinal. Continuously seeking new relationships to match patient needs, we also added some new offerings such as REM sleep studies.
- **And data will show medication assistance stats as provided by Alliance for Pharmaceutical Access (APA).** *Teaming with APA, has facilitated our patients received medication assistance valued at \$108,142 during this grant term. As a sidenote, there have been many helping hands and support from individuals, facilities, agencies, and other nonprofits. As a way to say thank you, we are very happy to return the favors whenever possible. Example: we are working collaboratively with AIDS Support Network to provide HIV testing on site at our clinic and also assist their personnel as needed when treatment is needed for a patient.*

Program/Project OUTCOMES:

We will measure the effectiveness of our program with these goals in mind:

- **Dental care services will be started during 2013.** *Grand opening was in March 2014 as explained earlier in this report.*
- **10% increase in total number of patients served in 2013 compared to 2012 figures**
Exceeded projected outcome. There were 2,451 patient appointments 7/2013 – 6/2014 compared to 1,603 in the previous 12 months.
- **75% of our in-house lab testing/sampling costs will be lower than local “market rate.”**
Accomplished. Our costs to perform lab tests continue to be 1/6th the cost to provide had they been outsourced and paid for at Medi-Cal rates (due to volunteer staffing and working closely with vendors to utilize discount pricing whenever possible).
- **75% of clinic patients will not seek primary care at a hospital ER unless physician advised.**
Accomplished. Only 14 patients were admitted to a hospital ER per physician order during this grant term. We also note that with our expanded hours/days of operation, we are receiving referrals for primary care follow-ups from hospital ER departments more frequently and we are working to expand this trend further.
- **10% decrease in average wait time for medical or vision appointments (compared to Jan. 2013).** *Accomplished. Wait time for a medical appointment has dramatically decreased: from a high of 3-months to now usually within 2 weeks and we now are offering at least one walk-in appointment slot per day. This has been especially helpful for hospital referrals to us for post-ER follow-ups like removing stitches and help decrease the use of ERs for non-emergencies. Vision and dental patient appointments are still offered part-time two days/week, but it's a goal to increase capacity in the future.*
- **100% of patients will receive health education related to their clinic visit.** *Accomplished. As we encourage patients to be active participants in maintaining or elevating their personal wellness levels, we assist with informational tools and tips as described earlier in this report. .*
- **100% of patients will receive services at no charge.** *Accomplished for medical and diagnostic services, vision, and physical therapy. While basic dental care is being provided free of charge, at this point, for patients needing more complex dental procedures such as root canals, crowns, dentures, etc., we have been able to coordinate free services for a few patients with extremely grave oral health situations and no ability to pay. However, we are currently not in a position to offer all patients these complex procedures in-house or free of charge. Instead, we currently refer most patients to the private practices of certain specialists who are offering their services to our patients pro-bono, but for the associated facility use fees and dental lab materials/fabrication costs, we have negotiated discounted rates with the providers that the patient pays. It is a future goal to gradually be able to assist patients further.*

October 2014 will mark the third anniversary of the opening of the SLO Noor Clinic. From the start, the County of San Luis Obispo has been a leading supporter of the Clinic and we are grateful.

In closing, our multi-faceted operations have become a valued asset to provide access to quality healthcare for uninsured adults (ages 18-64) from throughout San Luis Obispo County. To illustrate our multi-disciplinary approach, we offer the following patient experience:

A female patient, 61, has diabetes and requires insulin daily. She is uninsured and living on a very modest income that is only slightly above the ceiling to qualify for Medi-Cal or other assistance. Her condition is monitored regularly with exams by our PA and her medication and diabetic supplies are provided via our association with Alliance for Pharmaceutical Access. However, before coming to us, she developed glaucoma and it was escalating. So much so that vision was impaired and she could not see well enough to self-administer her insulin injections. Our vision center not only treated her glaucoma, but also provided free eyeglasses. With her improved vision, she can control her diabetes effectively, avoid hyper- or hypo-glycemic incidents, and safely walk to the neighborhood store to buy provisions. (For her appointments and to attend our health class offerings, our locations are convenient for bus riders.) Should she develop foot ulcers (and diabetics do have a heightened tendency for this), our in-house podiatrist specialist can offer treatment like he has for other clinic patients. And knowing that poor oral health can lead to complications for diabetics, our medical and dental centers coordinate efforts to aid her. She reports a vastly improved quality of life and expresses her appreciation every visit. Best of all, we have many dozen more success stories we can share.

We look forward to a healthy future ahead for both our current and new patients!

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ahmad Nooristani', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Ahmad Nooristani, M.D.
Executive Director and CEO
SLO Noor Foundation